

Rising to the Next TIER Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

1. What is the *Rising to the Next TIER* (a **T**ransparent, **I**nclusive **E**fficiency **R**evue) Program?

TIER is an independent review of the academic and administrative expenses across Iowa's three public universities (University of Iowa, Iowa State University, University of Northern Iowa) as well as the regent system as a whole. We are seeking creative, new ideas for investing our resources so Iowa's public universities can uphold their long tradition of academic excellence. The goal of TIER is to transform our universities so they are sustainable for the long term and true to their core academic missions of education, research and service as well as learning, discovery and engagement.

2. Why is TIER needed now?

The status quo is unsustainable if we are to maintain Iowa's high standard of academic quality. The world of higher education is facing severe economic constraints that require our universities to transform their organizations and reduce their reliance on tuition increases and state funding. A comprehensive, system-wide review of Iowa's public universities is long overdue.

3. What is TIER trying to achieve?

Our goal is to help reduce student debt and ensure an affordable, high-quality public education for any Iowan who wants it. TIER will help us measure the efficiency of our operations and the effectiveness of our programs and incorporate best practices from across the nation to ensure we continue offering the highest quality education to Iowa students.

4. What areas of the universities does TIER cover?

TIER will be conducted across administrative and academic support services and programs at all three universities and cover 10 key functional areas: Academic Programs; Information Technology Services; Facilities Operations, Maintenance and Construction; Auxiliaries; Sourcing & Procurement; Finance; Research Administration; Human Resources; Marketing & Advertising; and Student Services/Academic Support Programs.

5. Who has input into this effort?

We are actively seeking ideas from all members of the campus community – faculty, students and staff – who want to make sure public dollars are well spent and our universities continue to thrive long into the future. Throughout this process, we will keep you informed and welcome your ideas to help shape the future of Iowa's public university system.

6. What is the role of the Board of Regents?

The Board is overseeing the TIER Subcommittee, which is managing the daily operations of the program. The TIER Subcommittee will keep the Board informed throughout the program.

Program Approach and Timeline

7. What is the program timeline?

Phase 1 of TIER includes a 10-week broad review of all in-scope areas and a compilation of opportunities to reduce costs, increase revenue, and improve service. The opportunities will be narrowed at the end of Phase 1 for further study in Phase 2.

8. Who will be interviewed?

Faculty, staff, and students at each of the universities will be interviewed.

9. How will the progress of TIER be communicated?

Ongoing information about TIER will be communicated through many channels including website updates, emails, public forums, meetings, and interviews. We will evaluate the effectiveness of our communications on a regular basis to determine if additional communications are needed.

10. How will decisions be made about which opportunities to pursue?

The Board of Regents TIER Subcommittee will set specific criteria to help prioritize and decide which opportunities will be pursued and potentially implemented. The prioritization process will be both transparent and fair.

Documents Requested

11. What data, policies, documents and other information has Deloitte Consulting requested?

Deloitte Consulting's initial data request is available [here](#).

Public Forums

12. Where can I watch the video of each campus public forum?

[University of Iowa](#) (3/28/2014)

[Iowa State University](#) (4/1/2014)

[University of Northern Iowa](#) (4/7/2014)

Program Scope and Impact

13. How will TIER affect my department and other departments that I work with closely?

We do not know any specific departmental impacts at this time. We are still in the information-gathering phase of the review. We look forward to hearing your ideas on this topic.

14. Has the TIER Subcommittee considered the unique culture at each of the universities?

Yes. We understand each university has its own culture and other aspects that make it unique. We also know that all three universities share many things in common. That is why the TIER Subcommittee will look at each university independently, and also review the system as a whole.

15. What are some specific examples of change we can expect from TIER?

We do not know any specifics changes at this time. We look forward to hearing your ideas on this topic.

16. Will this have any impact on jobs?

We don't know; we are still in the information-gathering phase of the review.

17. Will "efficiency" lead to diminished opportunities or services for students?

No. One of the goals of TIER is to continue to provide high-quality education and service for students. Although service delivery may change, service quality will not be diminished, but rather potentially improved.

18. Which academic programs are included in the review?

All academic programs are under review. We will be reviewing each program to identify opportunities to improve efficiency. The first phase of TIER will focus on understanding each university's offerings and identifying opportunities for deeper evaluation.

19. Why are you only looking at undergraduate programs?

Phase 1 of TIER is focused on undergraduate programs, because the majority of the programs and students are undergraduates. Therefore we anticipate undergraduate programs are where we will find the most initial opportunities. We plan to include the graduate programs and professional schools for review in a later phase.

20. Are academic professionals involved in the decisions about academic matters?

Yes. During Phase I, our team will visit each university to better understand how academic decisions are made. We will work closely with faculty to identify potential improvement opportunities.

21. Are you going to shift more of our classes and programs into a Distance Learning format?

Distance Learning is one of the many items under consideration; however, we know Distance Learning is not right for every student or every program. During our review, we will consider all methods to enhance learning and deliver instruction more cost-effectively. After the Phase 1 review is complete, we will have a better idea of how Distance Learning fits into the potential opportunities.

22. How will faculty participate in TIER?

We are actively seeking participation from faculty, as well as other stakeholder groups. During Phase 1, this includes faculty interviews and academic review forums in addition to the standard communication formats provided to all stakeholders

23. Will faculty get to see the results of the review while it's still a draft so we can comment on your findings?

We will solicit input from faculty groups and leaders at key points in each phase of the program, including several milestones before final implementation decisions are made.

Engagement with the Community

24. How can I voice my ideas and/or concerns?

We encourage you to share your ideas through one of the following four websites:

- University of Iowa – <http://efficiency.uiowa.edu/>
- Iowa State University – <http://web.iastate.edu/efficiency/>
- University of Northern Iowa – <http://www.uni.edu/web/efficiency>
- Board of Regents - <http://www.regents.iowa.gov/TIER/tier.htm>

Saving Money

25. Is TIER expecting to save a specific amount of money and, if so, over what period of time?

There is no “target savings amount” for TIER; the goal is to identify savings that can be reinvested back into the universities’ missions.

Generating Revenue

26. Are the three universities considering new programs to generate revenue?

At this point in the review, we are open to considering all creative ideas to strengthen the universities.

27. Can we cut costs and boost revenues by leveraging technology?

Technology is one of the areas being reviewed. Other universities have seen strong results leveraging new technology for both cost savings and revenue generation. At this time, we don’t know if that will be a possibility for the Iowa system but it will be assessed.

Choosing the Consultant

28. What criteria did you use for selecting a consultant?

The procurement process which selected the consultant is regulated by the State of Iowa and can be found online at <http://www.regents.iowa.gov/Policies/Chapter%207/chapter7.06.htm>